

Brussels, 12 May 2005

## **Environment: Environment friendly lubricants promoted by EU Eco-label**

*Companies selling lubricants in Europe can now apply for the EU Eco-label if their product has a low impact on the environment. Hydraulic oils, chain saw oils, two stroke oils and greases are among the lubricants which will be able to carry the Eco-label scheme's 'Flower' logo if they meet strict environmental criteria. European consumers have long been able to rely on the Flower to help them find greener products and services, such as detergents, appliances, tourist accommodation, paints and varnishes, textiles and garden products.*

According to EU Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas: "There is growing concern about the environmental impacts of lubricants, so the advantages of having EU-wide criteria to encourage the market for more environmentally benign lubricants are clear. With the Flower, everybody can win - the EU Eco-label provides a strong marketing advantage to industry at the same time as giving reliable environmental information to consumers."

### **Green lubricants: A way forward**

Consumers can now turn to the EU Eco-label to choose a lubricant which reduces harm to water and soil when it is being used, and which has reduced emissions of the greenhouse gas CO<sub>2</sub>.

The development of the eco-labeling requirements for this product group has shown how the EU Eco-label scheme can co-operate closely with industry without losing the support of environmental groups. The agreed criteria have been welcomed as a balanced compromise that combines what is technically feasible with strong environmental ambitions.

### **Eco-label criteria**

The main environmental issues that have been taken into account in setting the criteria that lubricants must meet to obtain the Eco-label are: their toxicity to aquatic environments such as rivers and lakes; their biodegradability (i.e. how easily they break down into harmless elements in the environment); their capacity to accumulate in living organisms, including those in the food chain; and the use of renewable energy sources in their production. Particular attention has been given to minimising burdensome testing requirements.

Automotive lubricants are not covered since the technologies used in their production differ from those for other types of lubricants. This does not exclude the possibility of developing criteria for automotive lubricants in the future.

## **Background**

The EU Eco-label scheme was established in 1992 to promote products and services with a reduced environmental impact. Manufacturers meeting the environmental criteria established for a product group can obtain the Eco-label and display the Flower logo on their products. Each EU Member State has a competent authority which helps companies that want to obtain the Flower logo provides information on how to apply and checks compliance. Applicants must provide a detailed dossier showing how the technical criteria have been met.

The EU Eco-label scheme currently covers 23 different product groups, including household appliances, paper products, tourist accommodation and many others. Work on other product groups, such as soaps and shampoos, printed paper, heat pumps and furniture, is ongoing.

More than 235 licences have been awarded so far, covering several hundred different products. In the last two years, sales of EU Eco-labelled items have risen by more than 200%. The biggest increases have been achieved in Italy, Denmark, France and Spain.

For more details, visit the dedicated web-sites at <http://europa.eu.int/ecolabel> and <http://www.eco-label.com/>

